

The Traveling Friend

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2018 Wilmington Yearly Meeting Epistle

.... written by Dan Kasztelan and Julie Rudd

(Following is a summary of the Epistle. Please go to our CFM website at cincinnati-friends.org for the full Epistle.)

Teacher, Jesus was asked in the passage from Matthew that formed the theme of the 2018 Wilmington Yearly Meeting, *which command in God's Law is the most important?* Jesus' divinely wise answer, we read, made love the linchpin for the law.

Similar themes marked our time together in Yearly Meeting sessions. Our Clerk David Goff called upon us to engage in business sessions while remembering the great commandment to love God and love one another as we have been loved by Jesus.

We gathered this year in Maryville, Tennessee, knowing that at the rise of Yearly Meeting we would be diminished. Through the course of discussions over the year since our last annual sessions, we have wrestled with the expressed desire of several Meetings to disaffiliate from the Yearly Meeting, their Quarterly Meeting, or both.

Our way forward during these sessions was laid out by a summary of the discussion from the meeting of our Executive Committee, Ministry and Counsel and Permanent Board in Berea, Kentucky on May 19

....because there are Friends in our Yearly Meeting who cannot remain in fellowship with those holding other points of view related to scripture, it is time to consider moving toward separating peacefully and lovingly. If it's time to say good-bye to one another, then let's do it in love. If we cannot reconcile all opinions, let us endeavor to unite all hearts by loving God and loving Jesus.

(continued on page 6)



Quaker minister, author and photographer Brent Bill will make a return visit to our Meeting when he presents the message during worship on September 9, to be followed by a mini-seminar, *Writing from the Heart: Soulful Creativity*. During the seminar, he will present ways that writers may connect with readers and with themselves at the

deepest levels. He will also share tips and techniques for connecting with your writer's heart, as well as ways to bring your writing to life. His seminar, as well as worship, is open to the community.

Planning is also underway for him to present his *Lessons from a Bad Quaker* on October 6 during the meeting of United Society of Friends Women at our Meeting House. That presentation will be open to the community. Visit our website and our Facebook page for more information about his visits.



Call to Action the time is now

Cincinnati Friends Meeting has approved a Social Justice Minute on Immigration and Family Unity (*page 3*.) We have also approved a Minute from Maryville Friends (Tennessee) on Gun Violence (*page 5*.) The Minutes may also be found on our website and on our Facebook page. The Maryville Minute was approved at Yearly Meeting. Our Immigration Minute will be presented at mini Yearly Meeting.

We urge all Friends and people of conscience to take action immediately as noted in these Minutes and as otherwise led as individuals, families, congregations and groups.

Pastor's Corner

..... from Jim Newby

What Unites Us and Sustains Us?

Cincinnati held its first Festival of Faiths on June 24th at the Cintas Center at Xavier University, with the theme of

"Compassion Through Action." It was my privilege to sit on the Steering Committee of this inaugural event, along with representatives of all the major faith traditions in the greater Cincinnati area. Our Meeting was one of over 80 'vendors' who shared their faith with table displays, posters, handouts, music and message. "It was an historically inclusive assemblage," said Chip Harrod, the Executive Director of the event. "Each of us was enriched and encouraged by the other's presence. Each of us was both teacher and student that day."

Our Quaker tradition of silence was especially meaningful in the Interfaith Worship Service that began the event. Judy Leasure represented our meeting by reading from the works of John Woolman and introducing our Testimonies to those who had gathered.

Events such as this are very important, especially today when there are so many issues and culture clashes that threaten to undo the fabric of tolerant diversity that holds our world together. Such issues and clashes are no more prevalent than within our various religious communities and cultures.

A few years ago, the former President of Earlham College in Indiana and Middle-East expert Landrum Bolling was asked what concerned him most about our world. His response: "The rise of fundamentalism within all of the major faith traditions." Fundamentalists and extremists will always be a part of all religious traditions, whether it is the fundamentalism that keeps a strangle hold on traditions that can no longer be defended reasonably, or an extremism that does not respect anyone else's tradition or position. There will always be those who are *intolerant*. The Society of Friends has not escaped this kind of intolerance. The



best of our religious traditions, however, and the *best* that is within each of us will seek to discover those areas within our faith expressions that unite and sustain us and provide a basis of understanding and tolerance toward those perceived as 'different.'

"Compassion is the wellspring of religion," says Karen Armstrong, author and historian. She has observed that the **Golden Rule** was first expressed by Confucius some 500 years before Jesus and that it is the touchstone of all major faith traditions. This was the inspiration behind the focus on "Compassion in Action" at the Festival of Faiths.

There are many other foci that unite our world's religions. **First**, and at the heart of all three major faith traditions, is the hunger for a divine/human connection. Within Christianity, Judaism and Islam there are mystical traditions that greatly enhance our faiths and our love and search for the Living God.

Second, a concern for justice is at the core of all faith traditions. "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream," writes Amos in the Jewish Book of Prophets. Jesus made issues of justice the heart of his teaching. One of the *Five Pillars of Islam* addresses the disparity of wealth in the world and admonishes those who have much to help lift the burden of the less fortunate.

Third, a concern for community, built on the values of truth and integrity and a belief that we are members one of another is at the core of all faith traditions.

The Festival of Faiths modeled the truth that we should not just talk about what we believe. We must get beyond tolerance and talking and *work* together. We must let our actions show what we believe, what we hold in common. We are finding outlets to share our faith traditions and to work together, recognizing that compassion is at the heart of all of our traditions, as well as seeking that divine/human connection ... justice for all ... and community built upon the values of truth and integrity.

In short, we are finding ways to focus on those things we have in common, rather than focusing upon what separates us.



The following Social Justice Minute came from a leading of our Peace & Social Justice Committee in response to the depth of suffering surrounding the ongoing immigration crisis that has resulted in the separation of families. The Minute was approved during our July, 2018 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business and will be presented at the next mini Yearly Meeting.

It is our task as a Meeting and as Quakers to now move forward with actions so that our voices may join others from around our nation on behalf of those whose voices we hear only in their cries for the arms of their mothers and fathers.

A Social Justice Minute on Immigration and Family Unity

With a commitment to action on behalf of social justice since our founding in 1815, Cincinnati Friends Meeting has discerned a requirement to speak and to act in response to the ongoing immigration crisis within the United States, in particular as it relates to the safety and well-being of children and the re-unification of families.

We affirm the words of Martin Luther King when he said, “our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” The time for silence now is within our Meeting House as we come together in community to worship. The time for action is now within our own neighborhoods, cities, states and nation. As Quakers, we are required by our testimonies of truth, integrity, justice, equality and community to become visible, active advocates on behalf of children and families now being used as political pawns in national and international politics.

Through this Minute, we announce our public commitment to speak and to act so that every child, regardless of race, religion or country of origin, is guaranteed the right to be nurtured and safe within the sanctity of their own families, and that no rule or process currently or historically of any country shall infringe on and/or interfere with the unity of children and their families. We base this call to action on the traditions of all faiths in respect to the role of families as the fundamental building block of society.

We call on all who believe in our Quaker and human commitment to social justice to walk beside us in this journey by denouncing the zero tolerance immigration stance of the current U.S. administration as counter to social justice. We further, without hesitation, denounce any policy or process that separates infants and children from their families for political purposes. We ask for ongoing well-informed and well-directed communication with elected officials at the state and national levels to reject such policies and ask them to step forward as leaders to develop a plan to re-unify children who have been separated from their families due to current policies and to further seek reunification for those who have been separated over the course of the current crisis, as well as those who have been separated during previous administrations. We demand with our resources, our voices and our votes that a fair, humane and compassionate immigration policy be developed and that it becomes the law of the land so that no other generation of children will ever face the trauma and tragedy facing so many currently. We cannot and will not tolerate the heart-breaking cries of children begging for the arms of their mothers and fathers a moment longer!

We are lifted up by the call for action by the Spirit that sees that of God in everyone and by these words from Quaker Bayard Rustin, who said, “surely I must at all times attempt to obey the law of the state. But when the will of God and the will of the state conflict, I am compelled to follow the will of God.”

Call to action

- ✓ Contact us at 513-791-0788 or go to our website to download a copy of our Minute that you can then share with elected officials, community leaders, faith leaders, your friends and family.
- ✓ Share ideas with us on what you are doing as an individual, family, group or community of faith.
- ✓ Join community organizations, such as AMOS, in their ongoing efforts for social justice.
- ✓ Like our Minute on our Facebook page and share with your Facebook/Social Media friends.
- ✓ Continue to deeply and reverently hold the children and their families in the Light so that they may know that they are not alone and not forgotten.

Faces of Addiction**Changing the Conversation about
Addiction One Portrait at a Time**

Eric's poignant photo of Tabatha is now her lasting legacy. She died after sharing her story with Eric and posing for this photograph. She died not of an overdose but of general septicemia, isolated and growing sicker by the day for two weeks on the couch at home because no one could or would take her to a hospital.

Cincinnati Friends member Eric Hatch is experiencing the call to ministry that so many Quakers have followed over so many generations. With his gift of artistic photography, he has embarked on his ministerial journey with a multi-media project called **Faces of Addiction**.

The goal is to create an art experience for at least 500,000 people which will enable them to see addicted people in a new way. The purpose of his ministry is to change the way we see addicted people.

He is photographing and recording the stories of 40-50 people from throughout the region who are struggling with addiction. CFM members Rick Reckman and Brian Page are serving as members of the project's nonprofit Board.

More information is available at facesofaddiction.net

Minute of Ministerial Support

CFM approved the following Minute in support of Eric during our July, 2018 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:

Cincinnati Friends Meeting recognizes the leading to ministry of Eric Hatch through his professional artistic expression and through the depth of his calling in service to individuals who are struggling with addiction. Eric has experienced change within himself and within those he has photographed as part of his ministry to date. Through his passion for his ministry, change and growth in both spirit and action will continue for him and those involved in his ministry. We trust, as does he, that 'way will open' as the Spirit leads.

We see that Eric has been given the gift of sharing important stories with his artistry as a photographer and that he has experienced and continues to experience that of God in himself and in those who have become part of his ministry.

To further support him in his ministry, as a Meeting we will share information about him and his ministry in our newsletter, on Facebook and social media and on our website. His Minute of Support will be included in our weekly bulletin, which will include contact information for his website. We will publicize activities related to his ministry, such as gallery openings. Individual members and attenders may offer encouragement and support as they are led.

*Note: Eric's first solo show, **Hard Times for These Times**, the psyche of the last 50 years expressed through architecture and artifacts, ran for two months at the Middletown Arts Center in December, 2017 and January, 2018.*

The Traveling Friend is a publication of Cincinnati Friends Meeting. Please contact us with comments or questions, to add or delete names from our mailing list and for change of address.

Contact us at office@cincinnati-friends.org.

www.cincinnati-friends.org 513-791-0788

*Jim Newby, Minister Judy Leasure, Editor
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CFM stands with Maryville

Following deep discernment and with action during our July, 2017 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, CFM affirms our support for Maryville (Tennessee) Friends Meeting Statement on Gun Violence and encourages consideration of people of faith to join together in support of this Minute.

“We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world.” In 1660, the Society of Friends sent this declaration to King Charles II of England, a summation of what came to be known as the Friends ‘Peace Testimony,’ and which Maryville Friends continues to hold as an ideal. Along with being a statement against warfare, this is a statement against violence of any sort, and has motivated hundreds of years of Quaker work for social change, justice, and peace throughout the world.

We at Maryville Friends have been saddened and horrified by the spate of violence and murder in the United States that has seemed to grow in volume over the past decade or more, and, in particular, the ease with which high profile mass killings have been accomplished with firearms. In praying and considering some possible responses, we recognize we come from a variety of interpretations of the 2nd Amendment in our Meeting. We wish to find a way forward that addresses both the concerns of survivors, while not infringing beyond reasonable measures on the freedom of law abiding citizens.

While some may be interested in more strict measures, we feel the following are reasonable. With prayer and consideration, we propose these for the Friendsville Quarterly and Wilmington Yearly Meetings to recommend to the states of Tennessee and Ohio, and the government of the United States:

- *Ban of the sale and purchase of semi-automatic rifles;
- *When such weapons are seized after their use in a crime, or when they are found by law enforcement in the course of pursuing other crimes, that they be destroyed upon completion of any testing or other law-enforcement investigative purpose;
- *Ban of the sale and purchase of high-capacity magazines, as well as bump stock accessories, which make mass deadly shootings easier to accomplish;

*Close the ‘gun show loopholes’ by requiring federal licensure for gun show dealers and requiring background checks for all gun show transactions;

*Create a national or state-level registry system for any future firearms sales and those which already exist, analogous to vehicle or animal registries, that respects the rights for firearms owners.

We also support calls for greater mental health care resources that have been deteriorating over several decades. We support calls for mental health care reform, including perhaps temporary or permanent confiscation of firearms for those at greater risk of self-harm, recognizing that the greatest number of gun violence deaths are suicides and accidents.

Many of the recent mass shooters have been men that were motivated by a twisted, perverse understanding of masculinity and unfulfilled lives. We also support an increased national attentiveness to the radicalization that takes place among certain young men who find themselves drawn to violent, nihilistic and often misogynistic ideologies. Such men merit closer specific attention. The larger subculture and its metastasization via internet communities requires a deeper, more difficult conversation touching on many areas of our society.

We recognize that for many people, the curtailing of rights and freedoms may seem to be opposed to American history, but we would note that Justice Antonin Scalia held that certain restrictions, including such restrictions as we propose, would not violate the spirit of the 2nd Amendment.

Moreover, coming from a faith-based perspective, we can point to the words of Paul the Apostle, who wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:9, “**Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.**”

Despite his freedom in Christ, Paul is willing to forego a freedom in order to protect the spiritual well-being of others. It is the way of Christ to look out for one another. If that means some restriction in absolute freedom to provide a safer, healthier world for us and our children, we feel that this is an acceptable compromise.



WYM Epistle *(continued from page 1)*

Therefore, the task that faced us was to love one another as best we could through blessing the future work for Christ of those who chose or who will choose to leave Yearly Meeting and affirming the bonds of fellowship between those who have chosen to remain.

Both those remaining and those disaffiliating acknowledged that each was acting with integrity and from a deeply held commitment to faithfulness, striving to live the faith of Friends as they had learned it.

Those Monthly Meetings whose disaffiliation from Wilmington Yearly Meeting was approved and blessed include congregations from all three Quarterly Meetings. We pray for a successful future in ministry for Cuba Friends Meeting, Friendsville Friends Meeting, Friends Church Nashville Preparatory Meeting, Hardins Creek Friends Church and Rafter Chapel Friends Church. We also realize that there are other Meetings that are in a discernment process regarding their own affiliations. We hope to maintain ties of friendship and are open to future re-affiliation.

In an act of mourning our separation while blessing our disaffiliating Meetings, we agreed that Biblical interpretation is at the heart of our uneasiness and distrust and that we were not able to come to the same place in how we read the scriptures or in how we view the autonomy of Monthly Meetings and the authority of the Yearly Meeting. This is evidenced by our disagreement regarding the proper Christian understanding of marriage.

In our Peace Lecture on Saturday evening, we were reminded by visiting minister Eric Ginsburg that conflict is a necessary condition of our growth and creativity. "But when we relate to one another in a peace building process, no one is seen as an adversary," he said. "Peace is a necessarily continuous process, not a state of being." He also reminded us that the door through which some walk away need not close, metaphorically, behind them. "There may be a time when Friends reach a different sense of clarity. I hope that the door will indeed remain open."



Our Testimony of Community: Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley (c) visited our CFM exhibit during the first Festival of Faiths at the Cintas Center in June. He is pictured with CFM members (*front*) Judy Leasure and Jim Newby and (*back*) Judy Keairns and Elizabeth Newby. More than 80 exhibitors shared their faith at the event. We also were one of the presenters during the Interfaith Worship Service prior to the beginning of the Festival. Jim Newby served as a member of the Festival's Steering Committee. We also welcomed Nan Hatch, Paul Leasure (*who helped set up the exhibit*), Ray Geers and Barb Napier to our exhibit. In addition to information, we handed out 'Quaker' candy, which included root beer barrels and Cadbury caramel crème eggs, both of which have their origins with Quakers. Kristin Lally was our behind-the-scenes coordinator, making sure we had our display posters and individual spice bags that included our Quaker testimonies.



Speak Truth to Power

The Quaker credited with coining this much used phrase in today's environment of strident discourse will be honored in Cincinnati with various activities in September. Our Meeting will join with Community and Eastern Hill Friends to present a documentary viewing, as well as a panel discussion on the life of Bayard Rustin. Jim Newby will serve as one of the panelists. The documentary, "**Brother Outsider**," will be shown on September 4 at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati, with doors to open at 5:30 with a tour of the House. Bayard was one of the coordinators of the civil rights march on Washington. Jim met Bayard as a child when he visited the Newby family home. Jim's father was a Quaker pastor who was active in the Civil Rights Movement. For information on other Bayard Rustin activities go to: bayardthemanthedream.org.



Our Testimony of Stewardship With the leading of our Trustees, we met on June 2 for our Meeting for Weeding, tending our plant and flower beds around our Meeting House. Many hands made light work for all our volunteers gardeners, including Hal Angus, Carole Barnhart, Linda Daigle, Nan Hatch, Donna Kimmel, Jim Kimmel, Debbie Miller, Barb Napier, Jim Newby, Elizabeth Newby, Debbie Overmyer, Kathy Stewart and Glenn Williams.



Our Testimony of Community This beautiful handmade work from members of our Prayer Shawl Group has brought comfort during difficult times for those we will never meet in person but who have been with us in prayer as the focus of this ministry of caring. Prayer Shawl group member Nan Hatch made a trip to Hospice of Southwest Ohio in Cincinnati in July to deliver six lap robes, five shawls and two shrugs (*shawls with sleeves*) that the Group made during the previous year.



Jim and Elizabeth Newby prepare to load up their car to deliver our donations of linens to residents of Bethany House. A bench was filled to overflowing with the many donations in caring support of women and children who have been in abusive situations as they prepare to move into safe homes. Bethany House is one of our ongoing community ministries under the leading of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

Welcome new members once again

If it feels like they've been here before, they have. It's the second time around for Jim and Elizabeth Newby as members of Cincinnati Friends Meeting. The first time was in the 1970s when Jim and Liz first served as our pastoral family, along with their daughter Lisa.

We now welcome Jim and Liz back into membership upon the transfer of their membership from First Friends (Whitewater) Meeting in Richmond, Indiana. In addition to his ministry, Jim is also an author. Among his most notable works are: **Sacred Chaos and the Quest for Spiritual Intimacy** and **Elton Trueblood: Believer, Teacher and Friend**.

Elizabeth is Clerk of our active and spirit-led Peace and Social Concerns Committee, guiding such projects as our outreach to Bethany House, Tender Mercies, FreeStore Food Bank and more. She believes passionately in social justice and equality, with a special interest in issues related to immigration, based on her own childhood experiences coming to the United States from Mexico with her family. Under her guidance we have claimed our voices as part of the Sanctuary Movement and have become active partners with other community groups committed to social justice, such as AMOS.

Cincinnati Friends Meeting

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There's a good reason for the smile on Dick Patterson's face. He's just given two jars filled with coins to our efforts on behalf of the Friends Meeting in Puerto Padre, Cuba. With his donation, a donation from our



Peace & Social Concerns Committee and others, we now have more than \$400 to present to the project, which is a community effort by Meetings in Wilmington Yearly Meeting. The goal is \$12,000 from Yearly Meeting to help the Puerto Padre Friends with renovation of their old school into a community center. Barb Napier is coordinating our CFM commitment to fill Mason Jars with coins and currency. Our efforts will continue into 2019 in our sharing ministry as part of Yearly Meeting.



The Williams Family Band led meeting for worship in July with their gift of music. Bill III (l) and Bill II attend our Meeting. They perform with Bill III's sister Leslie Lavinia Williams in the old American tradition of harmony singing, as established by the Hutchinsons in the pre-Civil War era. They draw their harmonies and vocal style from American shape-note singing, country string bands and the English folk traditions, as practiced by groups such as the Watersons.

Seeking God daily through simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality.

..... *growing in Community*
Welcoming our new CFM members



Conversations from more than two decades have led to Greg and Judy Keairns joining CFM as two of our new members. Greg and Judy were friends with Charlie and Suzanne Johnson, who often shared with them about their worship and fellowship with CFM. Now after one year of attending our Meeting, they are pleased to be a part of our open and affirming congregation that is in relationship with the Sanctuary Movement. "It obviously took a while for us to show up," shares Judy, "but we are so happy we did. The Quaker testimonies are a dream come true for us and growing in them along with Quaker teachings has enabled us to stretch without limits. We feel a closer connection now as members than we did as attenders, although we were never treated differently as attenders."

Both Greg and Judy expect to grow and expand their spirituality. They see no limits in the possibility of such growth within CFM. They especially enjoy reading the testimonies as they are included in our weekly bulletins.

Judy is a member of our Peace and Social Concerns Committee because, "I have a heart for social justice, helping those less fortunate and for victims of any kind of abuse." Greg especially enjoys meeting and greeting friends at Meeting, as he does in his business, which is his hobby as well.

They have a shop-at-home flooring business, which also includes their son Brandon.



Elaine Williams, pictured with husband Glenn, has followed his lead and is now one of our newest CFM members. "I've been attending about a year now due to my husband's leading to become a Quaker and member of CFM. I find in worship a place where I can listen for God, a discipline I had gotten away from. I find that my relationships are growing as I embrace my fellow Friends in love. They encourage and challenge me in my faith. I feel very welcomed!"

Elaine feels called to all of our Quaker testimonies, with a special leading towards integrity and equality, things that she has been passionate about all of her life. Her interests include ministry for finances and budgeting. "I also enjoy feeding the flock," she shares. She studies the Bible and follows the teachings of Jesus. "It is my prayer that all Friends may know and experience His unconditional love. He is my hope and my truth."

Elaine has a sister in Hawaii, two married daughters and five grandchildren. Her hobby is genealogy. Her most unexpected discovery is that she shares an 11th great-grandfather with Princess Diana. "God has called me to continue this pursuit," she said, "not only for myself but in the helping of others as they discover their family legacies."

She loves being in worship with her husband as they grow together in faith and as they share that faith with their grandchildren, who often attend Meeting with them. "Our grandchildren just love Ms. Patia," she shares, referring to Patia Williams, our First Day teacher.



One wrong turn and a great opening and because of that we now welcome Ray Geers as one of our new CFM members. "I was doing contract physical therapy on weekends to earn some extra money," explains Ray, "I was driving east on Keller Road from the Kenwood

Terrace Nursing Home and I forgot to turn right on to Miami Avenue. Going straight for too long was a 'wrong turn' for me, or was it?" Ray shares that was when he caught a glimpse of our Meeting sign and the 'unusual-looking' building. "I made a mental note - Quakers - and filed it away in my brain. I thought of Amish and Shakers and such and I also associated it with oatmeal, and I always liked oatmeal . . . a lot." Ray, who lives in Madeira with his wife Jeanne and their children, Ben, Rosie and Marybeth, was a 'cradle Catholic' and a Buddhist enthusiast. He has a Masters Degree in Theology from Xavier University and is a former Trappist novice monk. He is currently studying Non-Violent Communication and Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. He likes to run, paint and play the ukulele. He is currently working at Mercy Anderson Hospital as a Physical Therapy Assistant but is looking to follow a leading to become a Quaker chaplain.

"The Quakers I met here and at the two other Meetings seemed quietly confident and at ease with their faith," he says. "They didn't give me the impression that I needed to be 'converted' in any way. It's hard to overestimate how important this was to this wandering and sometimes weary spiritual traveler."

He participates in Centering Down and has attended many of our CFM groups. He also helps with the microphone during worship. He is particularly drawn to our Quaker testimonies, saying of them, "the Testimonies are as elegant as the Four Noble Truths or the 7 Habits of Highly Successful People. They beautifully and concisely enunciate how to live and love in community. Pure genius! I hope I can live up to these values as I grow with you in the coming years and I humbly thank all the kind folks who first welcomed me here. Thank God for wrong turns!"



It's a family where Quaker ties run deep for Eric and Ashley Staples, as they join us as new members. Eric's mother attended Cincinnati Friends after the family moved from Boston in the 1950s. In the late 1950s, she transferred their family memberships to Community Friends. Eric, along with his wife Cassandra and son James, attended Eastern Hills Friends around 2001.

James participated with our Young Friends while he was a teen and really enjoyed the group. Daughter Ashley decided she would like to be a part of our Young Friends when she became a teenager. The circle came around as Eric and Ashley began attending CFM last summer and part of that is due to the other teens. "They are the nicest group of kids I have ever met," Ashley shares. She also enjoys the classes and our Young Friends leaders.

Eric enjoys meeting for worship and is planning to begin to attend the centering down time prior to worship. He is glad to be back with his Quaker roots after taking time away studying psychology for spiritual growth, eventually becoming a social worker. He left his work to be a stay-at-home dad when James started school, followed a few years later by Ashley.

Today Cassandra works as a mental health nurse and helps her mother run the family business of rental properties. James just completed his college work at NKU and is looking for work in computer networking and security. Ashley has been dancing since the age of three and two years ago began attending CCM Preparatory at UC, where she is studying ballet. Eric stays busy as her transportation. Both father and daughter share a love for nature. Ashley especially loves animals.

As father and daughter continue to immerse themselves in the life of our Meeting, they are hoping that Cassandra and James may join them in the future.